

PPM 591

HOME MODIFICATION

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591.01 PURPOSE OF HOME MODIFICATION

The purpose of home modification is to provide disability-related accessibility and disability-accommodative modifications to the home of an eligible individual to the extent that such modifications are required for the eligible individual to:

- (1) access and participate in other planned vocational rehabilitation services requiring frequent or long-term participation that will contribute substantially to his or her vocational rehabilitation; and/or
- (2) achieve the employment outcome specified by his or her Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

591.02 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS

Home modification services can be provided only for eligible individuals receiving services under a current Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

NATURE AND SCOPE OF HOME MODIFICATION ASSISTANCE**591.03 GENERAL NATURE AND SCOPE OF SERVICE PROVISION**

As appropriate to the vocational rehabilitation needs of each eligible individual and in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, home modifications provided with Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance include:

- (1) home modification evaluation;
- (2) provision of the home modifications recommended by the evaluator and approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; and
- (3) inspection of the completed home modifications.

591.04 HOME MODIFICATION EVALUATION**(1) EVALUATION REQUIREMENT**

A home modification evaluation must be obtained prior to the provision of any home modification. An evaluation is required, regardless of the anticipated type, scope, complexity, or cost of the modifications.

(2) PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the home modification evaluation is to determine the nature and scope of the home modifications vocationally required (if any) and, as applicable, the appropriate specifications for the modifications recommended.

(3) NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Each home modification evaluation:

(A) must be performed by an evaluator of the individual's informed choice who is qualified in accordance with paragraph (4) of this section;

(B) must include any assessment of the eligible individual and his or her place of residence (particularly an in-home functional assessment) necessary to meet the requirements identified in paragraph (3)(C) of this section, following; and

(C) must result in a written evaluation report to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor which—

(1) is provided in a timely manner and

(2) identifies the nature and scope of the eligible individual's home modification needs relative to Vocational Rehabilitation Program participation and the achievement of his or her employment outcome, including specific recommendations regarding the particular modifications required to meet the eligible individual's assessed vocational needs and, as applicable, any necessary specifications as to type, features, placement, construction or installation, and other factors pertinent to the modifications recommended, consistent with applicable accessibility standards, local building codes and zoning ordinances, and the requirements of this chapter.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. When requesting a home modification evaluation, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must communicate to the evaluator the information necessary for the evaluator to conduct a complete and accurate evaluation. Such information must minimally include, but is not limited to: (1) the nature and scope of the eligible individual's physical or mental impairment; (2) his or her planned employment outcome; (3) the identified activities relevant and necessary to the planned outcome that must be performed in the home environment and that are anticipated to require modifications; and (4) any specific questions or issues that the Counselor needs to have addressed. The evaluation report must address the needs communicated by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. As appropriate to the modifications recommended and the information needed by a contractor or other home modification provider, the Counselor may request that the evaluation report include equipment lists, measurements and specifications, or one or more diagrams showing the general orientation of the home and other existing structures on the property and the placement of recommended modifications. Evaluators must be instructed to identify the least costly modifications needed to meet the employment needs of the individual, but may report additional and alternative solutions. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may disallow vocational rehabilitation assistance for recommended modifications that

are determined by the Counselor to be vocationally irrelevant or unnecessary, or which are inconsistent with program policy.]

(4) HOME MODIFICATION EVALUATION SERVICE PROVIDER STANDARDS

The service provider selected to perform the required home modification evaluation must be an available evaluator of the eligible individual's informed choice who:

(A) is qualified by training, experience, and knowledge regarding accessibility standards, appropriate modifications, and their applications for home modification, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program policy and practice;

(B) has no ownership or other financial interest in the residence to be modified or the modifications to be made; and

(C) has no family or other significant personal relationship with the eligible individual or with the immediate family members of the eligible individual.

591.05 HOME MODIFICATION PROVISION

(1) GENERAL NATURE AND SCOPE OF MODIFICATIONS

Home modifications provided with vocational rehabilitation assistance can include only those modifications determined to be relevant and necessary for an eligible individual to participate in other planned vocational rehabilitation services of a significant duration and to achieve the planned employment outcome identified in his or her Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Modifications include the costs of modification design, installation or construction, and fitting, adaptation, or other necessary individualization.

(2) SPECIFIC TYPES OF MODIFICATIONS PERMITTED

Consistent with the vocational rehabilitation needs of each individual, Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance for home modifications may be authorized to the extent necessary to:

(A) modify one exterior entry/exit (by the provision of exterior door widening, a ramp or lift, and the modification of immediate entry/exit accesses, door handles and locks, safety railings, and related features), when—

(1) the ability to enter and exit the home is required for the individual to access and participate in other substantial Vocational Rehabilitation Program services provided outside the home which are specified by the individual's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as to be provided and/or to prepare for, enter or reenter, or maintain the employment outcome identified by the IPE, and

(2) the modifications provided are required due to the individual's disability.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Consistent with the requirements of this section, Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance cannot be provided for the modification of more than one exterior entry/exit. When modifying the entry/exit, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will assist with the provision of no more than one ramp or one lift to make the entry/exit accessible. This limitation, however, applies to the exterior entry/exit ramp only, and does not limit the provision of interior ramps or lifts, to the extent that additional ramps or lifts are required for interior accessibility for purposes consistent with program policy.]

(B) create an accessible work site within the home (by the provision of widened interior doorways, height-adjusted work surfaces, modified work space lighting, and similar modifications) appropriately modified to accommodate an eligible individual's disability-related work needs, when:

(1) the home itself is the planned work site (such as when the planned employment outcome identified in the IPE is telecommuting for competitive employment, home-based self-employment, a home-based small business enterprise, homemaking, or unpaid family work); and

(2) modifications are required to address disability-related needs and render the work area accessible and appropriate for the intended work;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If the employment outcome specified by the IPE is homemaking, the work area to be modified includes all areas of the home in which

homemaking functions will be performed. In such cases, accessibility and accommodative modifications may be provided for a kitchen, bathroom, laundry area, and other areas within the home necessary for the performance of meal preparation, laundering, cleaning, and other housekeeping functions pertinent to the planned outcome to the extent that the individual will be performing the related homemaking functions. Such modifications may include height-adjusted kitchen cabinets and countertops and bathroom cabinets and vanities, modified faucets, grab bars, and similar accommodations. In all such instances, however, the nature and scope of the homemaking functions to be performed and how the modifications are relevant and necessary for their performance must be clearly identified.]

(C) modify a bathroom, kitchen, or bedroom (but not more than one of each) with accessibility and accommodative modifications (as, for example, widened interior access doorways, enlarged shower stalls, grab bars, lowered vanities, cabinets and countertops, and disability accommodated clothes and storage closets) to the extent required to facilitate the individual's ability to access and utilize such rooms for the purposes of bathing and grooming, preparing and eating their own meals, and dressing and undressing themselves as necessary daily preparations for work; and

(D) provide minimum pass-through accommodations (such as beveling or internal ramps or lifts) to hallways and other connecting accesses to and between other areas of the home modified with Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance.

(3) HOME MODIFICATION SERVICE PROVIDER STANDARDS

The service provider selected to provide the approved home modification must be an available contractor or other service provider of the eligible individual's informed choice who:

(A) (A) is qualified by training, experience, and knowledge regarding accessibility standards, appropriate modifications, and their applications for home modification, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program policy and practice;

(B) has no ownership or other financial interest in the residence to be modified or the modifications to be made; and

(C) has no family or other significant personal relationship with the eligible individual or with the immediate family members of the eligible individual.

591.06 INSPECTION OF COMPLETED HOME MODIFICATIONS

(1) INSPECTION REQUIREMENT

An inspection must be provided for all home modifications completed with Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance. The inspection must be performed regardless of the type, scope, complexity, or cost of the modifications provided.

(2) PURPOSE OF THE HOME MODIFICATION INSPECTION

The purpose of the home modification inspection is to assure that the modifications provided:

(A) have been completed and meet all applicable specifications, as recommended by the home modification evaluation and approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor;

(B) are consistent with applicable accessibility standards and local building codes and zoning ordinances; and

(C) are functioning appropriately.

(3) NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

Each home modification inspection:

(A) must be conducted by an inspector of the eligible individual's informed choice who is qualified in accordance with paragraph (4) of this section;

(B) must include any on-site inspection and evaluation of all completed home modifications (including a situational observation of the modifications in actual operation or use) necessary to make the required determinations specified in paragraph (2) of this section, preceding; and

(C) must result in a written inspection report to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor which—

(1) is provided in a timely manner and

(2) addresses the issues identified paragraph (2) of this section to the satisfaction of the individual and the inspector, including any corrections or adjustments needed.

(4) INSPECTION SERVICE PROVIDER STANDARDS

The home modification inspection must be conducted either by the evaluator who performed the home modification evaluation and developed the initial written home modification recommendations, or by another available service provider of the individual's informed choice who is similarly qualified, in accordance with section 591.04(4) of this chapter.

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF SERVICE PROVISION

591.07 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance for home modifications can be provided only:

(1) for disability-related and necessary modifications which are required to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability;

(2) when such modifications are required for, and will contribute substantially to, an eligible individual's ability to qualify for, secure, and maintain employment;

(3) in accordance with the conditions and limitations specified by the individual's current Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and applicable program policies; and

(4) with the prior knowledge, approval, and authorization of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program will assist with the costs of home modifications only to the extent of the costs of those modifications recommended by a qualified evaluator and approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor as disability-relevant and vocationally necessary prior to service provision. Additional costs incurred by an individual or family for any modification that is different from or in addition to the modifications approved and authorized by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (including any changes arranged for by the individual or family with a contractor or other service provider without the prior knowledge, approval, and authorization of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) will not be paid for or reimbursed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.]

591.08 AMOUNTS PAID OR REIMBURSED FOR HOME MODIFICATIONS

(1) GENERAL LIMITATION

Amounts paid or reimbursed for home modification services cannot exceed the actual cost of the services approved and authorized by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

(2) LEAST COST

All Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance provided for home modifications is limited to the services required to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of an eligible individual at the least cost for the program, in accordance with program fiscal policies described in PPM chapter 600. If two or more means of providing necessary modifications are available and either means would meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the individual, the least costly means will establish the maximum cost that will be paid by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. A more costly option can be utilized only if the individual agrees to, makes arrangements for, and pays all additional expenses.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If, for aesthetic or other reasons, an individual's personal preference is for a more costly brand, model, style, options and features, or provider, supplier, or source than that determined to be the least costly program option, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must assure that the individual understands the limit of program assistance and his or her responsibility for costs exceeding the amount of program assistance allowed.]

(3) PRICE QUOTES

If the total cost of the modifications to be provided is sufficient to require price quotes consistent with program price quote policies described in PPM chapter 600, two or more price quotes must be obtained for the services of the contractors or other service providers utilized to provide, install, or construct all equipment, devices, or other material modifications. Where price quotes are required, the lowest quote obtained establishes the maximum allowable Vocational Rehabilitation Program cost participation. A more costly provider can be selected only if the individual agrees to, makes arrangements for, and pays all additional expenses that exceed the lowest price quote obtained.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If an individual prefers to utilize a service provider other than the provider offering the lowest price quote, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must assure that the individual understands the limit of program assistance and his or her responsibility for costs exceeding the amount of program assistance allowed.]

(4) COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

The provision of home modification services, is subject to program comparable services and benefits requirements. A search for comparable services and benefits resources is required, and the provision of home modification services is conditional upon the individual's application for or acceptance of any comparable service or benefit for which he or she qualifies, as described in PPM chapter 600.

(5) FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

Eligible individuals and their families may be required to meet all or a part of the costs of home modifications, in accordance with program financial participation requirements described in PPM chapter 610.

591.09 PREREQUISITES FOR HOME MODIFICATION ASSISTANCE

(1) HOME OWNERSHIP

Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance will be provided only for home modifications to a residence owned or being purchased by an eligible individual or the individual's family, and will not be provided for

modifications of any kind to leased or rented residential properties, including rented apartments.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must ascertain the ownership of any residence for which modifications are requested prior to the provision of any home modification service (including a home modification evaluation to determine the nature and scope of the modifications required)].

(2) WRITTEN PERMISSION FOR MODIFICATIONS

Written permission must be obtained from the homeowner or homeowners (the eligible individual and/or family members) prior to the provision of any actual home modifications.

PROHIBITED USES

591.10 PROHIBITED USES OF HOME MODIFICATION ASSISTANCE

Vocational Rehabilitation Program home modification assistance is not available, and cannot be provided:

- (1) for the purchase of land or the purchase or construction of a building (including a home or any other permanent structure) for any individual;
- (2) for any modification inconsistent with applicable accessibility standards or in violation of local building codes or zoning ordinances;
- (3) for the modification of any home determined to be—
 - (A) unsuitable for the appropriate and necessary modifications by reason of existing space, floor plan configuration, location of supporting structures, or other limitations inherent to the home and its design and construction, or
 - (B) unfit for the appropriate and necessary modifications, due to its present condition;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. An evaluation of the suitability or condition of the home may be obtained at program expense prior to the provision of any modification upon the

recommendation of a home modification evaluation or at the discretion of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.]

(4) to alter the basic structure or configuration of the home, or to effect repairs, for the purpose of meeting the suitability or fitness requirements of paragraph (3) of this section, preceding;

(5) for any of the ordinary, ongoing costs of home ownership, including, but not limited to—

(A) home mortgage payments,

(B) property taxes or penalties,

(C) homeowners insurance (including insurance coverage for completed home modifications),

(D) uninsured property damage due to fire, flood, weather-related event, accident, vandalism, theft, or other loss,

(E) ongoing residential utility or other services (such as electric, gas, water, sewer, telephone, sanitation, pest control, lawn care, snow removal, or similar services),

(F) general or emergency home maintenance or repair (such as plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning, or telephone maintenance and repair services), or

(G) home improvements (such as landscaping, interior or exterior painting, siding, replacement windows, porch enclosures, driveway or sidewalk paving, or similar improvements) unrelated to or not required for the home modifications provided;

(6) for items which are ordinary, usual and customary home fixtures, furnishings, appliances, equipment, or other appurtenances and that are features common to all homes and represent needs irrespective of program participation, disability, or employment status;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Vocational program assistance is not available, and cannot be authorized, for the purchase, maintenance, repair, or replacement of ordinary

equipment and appliances (such as furnaces, water heaters, stoves, and refrigerators), furnishings (such as ordinary furniture, draperies, wall pictures, and other décor), or other household articles (such as linens, cooking utensils, tableware, lawn mowers, and similar items) that are typically found in a home.]

(7) for the modification of any home which is not the individual's primary place of residence (including, but not limited to, any vacation home, recreational motor home, or residential or business property being offered for sale, rent, or lease to others by the individual or the individual's family);

(8) for the modification of any home which the eligible individual is not expected to occupy as a sole or primary residence for the duration of his or her Vocational Rehabilitation Program participation;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Home modifications will be pursued only subsequent to discussions regarding an individual's plans, any necessary or anticipated moves, and expected living arrangements during Vocational Rehabilitation Program participation. Modification of the home is not appropriate when a move is anticipated or program participation will require the individual to reside primarily outside of the home for an extended period of time (as, for example, when the individual will attend postsecondary training and reside full time in on-campus housing).]

(9) to pay for any part of the costs for new home construction;

(10) for any room addition or extension;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Consistent with the vocational needs of the individual, Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance may be provided to convert existing space from one use to another (such as the conversion of a garage into a home office when: (1) the planned employment outcome involves telecommuting, a home-based small business enterprise, or other home-based employment; and (2) converting the garage into office space is the sole or most cost-effective means of providing the required work space). Program assistance is not available, however, for any home modification that would add new space to a home through the construction of a room addition or extension, or which would require the extension of the existing foundation or roof line, or the building of an exterior wall.]

(11) to provide or modify any structure or any part of a structure which has no relevance for the performance of job functions required by the planned employment outcome specified by the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE);

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance is not available, for example, to provide or finish patios, enclosed porches, attics, or basements, or to provide barns, storage sheds, or other outbuildings that are not directly and specifically vocationally relevant and necessary.]

(12) for the purposes of general safety or security solely, such as—

(A) the purchase, installation, or other costs associated with standard or specialized smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, or security devices, systems, or services, or

(B) the provision or modification of secondary emergency or backup systems, the sole purpose of which is to provide duplicative or alternate systems to meet the same need (such as a second lift for use in the event of primary equipment failure or breakage); or

(13) for the maintenance, repair, or replacement of home modifications.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The eligible individual and family are expected to maintain warranties and insurance on home modifications to meet maintenance, repair, and replacement needs.]

RECORD OF SERVICES DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

591.11 RECORD OF SERVICES CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

(1) GENERAL DOCUMENTATION

When home modifications are provided with Vocational Rehabilitation Program assistance, the record of services for the individual must:

(A) demonstrate that the modifications provided are vocationally relevant and necessary, and will contribute substantially toward the achievement of the employment outcome of the individual, consistent with sections 591.01 and 591.07(1) and (2) of this chapter;

(B) include any documentation necessary to demonstrate that home ownership has been ascertained and that the homeowner's permission for the modifications provided has been obtained, per section 591.09 of this chapter; and

(C) include the home modification evaluation and inspection reports required by sections 591.04 and 591.06 of this chapter.

(2) FISCAL DOCUMENTATION

The home modification expenses paid for or reimbursed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program cannot exceed the actual costs incurred for the modifications approved and authorized by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, as evidenced by signed authorizations and claim-vouchers that include, as applicable, supporting billings, paid receipts, or other substantiating documentation for each expense for which payment or reimbursement is requested. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor cannot authorize program assistance for modifications not explicitly documented. All fiscal documentation pertaining to the home modification assistance provided, including all price quotes and authorizations and claim-vouchers, together with all supporting billings or paid receipts required to process payment, must be in evidence in the individual's record of services.

591.12 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM COMPLIANCE

All required information, data, and documents must be incorporated and maintained in the record of services for the individual in a manner consistent with Indiana Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS) requirements.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations 34 CFR §§76.533, 80.3, 361.4(a), 361.5(b)(7), (8), (44), and (45), 361.29(d)(1), 361.45(a)(2), 361.46(a)(2), 361.48(q), 361.50(a), 361.52, 361.53(b), and 361.54.]

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